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Firefighter Memorial Service Slated for March 7, 2009

One-Year Anniversary Ceremony to Pay Tribute to Fallen Firefighters Victor Isler and Justin Monroe

Salisbury, NC – February 27, 2009_The City of Salisbury and Salisbury Fire Department announce today that a Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at the Salisbury-Rowan Fire Fighters' Memorial, located adjacent to Chestnut Hill Cemetery, 1400 S. Main Street. The community is cordially invited to attend the early morning service which marks the one-year anniversary of the tragic loss of Firefighters Victor Isler and Justin Monroe. Local fire, rescue, emergency, and law enforcement personnel will pay homage to their fallen brothers during the 8:45 am service; service attendees are respectfully requested to gather at the memorial by 8:30 am. A designated area will be provided for wheelchair accessibility at the service.

The service will commence with a welcome message by Salisbury Fire Chief Robert "Bob" Parnell, followed in prayer by Captain Doug Stevens. At precisely 9:06 am, a moment of silence will be observed in respectful tribute to Firefighter Isler and Firefighter Monroe, who paid the ultimate sacrifice through their relentless dedication and commitment to service. Bagpiper Bobby Hunter will offer a piper's selection, followed by comments from Mayor Susan Kluttz. Following remarks, the Mayor will declare the lowering of the American Flag to half staff. At this time, Captain Mike Spry and Engineer Bobby Burleyson, serving as Honor Guards, will advance and lower the flag, where it will remain at half mast for the remainder of the day.

The ceremony will continue with the reading of the Fireman's Prayer by Salisbury Fire Marshal Terry Smith. Salisbury Battalion Chief David Morris, Miller's Ferry Fire Chief Bobby Fox, and Spencer Fire Chief Jay Baker will perform the "Ringing of the Bell" service. The fire bell will chime five times, in three distinct sets, signifying the "last return home". The "Placement of the Wreaths" will follow with Captain Rick Fleming escorting the Monroe family and Captain Tim Hurlocker escorting the Isler family. The service will conclude with a bagpiper's rendition of Amazing Grace, closing remarks by Chief Parnell, and the recitation of The Lord's Prayer by all in attendance.

Mayor Susan Kluttz offers, "On behalf of the Salisbury City Council, I would like to share that Firefighter Victor Isler and Firefighter Justin Monroe are truly heroes. The memory of their sincere dedication, love, and devotion for the City of Salisbury will remain in our hearts forever. As a community, we are eternally saddened by their loss and we uplift their memory each and every day. Thank you to the multitude of citizens, fire

departments, emergency service providers, businesses, and government entities that came to our rescue and embraced us during our darkest of hours. Your loyalty, prayers, and support continue to sustain us and provide us with hope for tomorrow.”

Chief Bob Parnell echoes those sentiments with heartfelt emotion. “The events on the morning of March 7, 2008 have forever changed our lives. Our dear brothers, Firefighter Victor Isler and Firefighter Justin Monroe, paid the ultimate sacrifice through their faithful service and loyalty. Their relentless valor offers a mere glimpse to the magnificent men that they truly were. Their memories will remain in our hearts always. All of our firefighters and rescuers throughout Salisbury and Rowan County are truly heroes. Each one has suffered and continues to deal with this loss in his or her, own way. To each and every individual who has assisted us during our time of need and to those who continue to support us through your kind acts, thoughts, and prayers, we are vastly appreciative and humbled. Your love and compassion are the very strength that allows us to continue each day in the service that our fallen brothers loved so well.”

A private luncheon service will be conducted at 11:30 am at Fire Station #1. The closed service will include the Isler and Monroe Families, Salisbury Firefighters and their families, and local dignitaries. Formalities will include the presentation of the highly-esteemed Order of the Long Leaf Pine and of an American flag to both the families of Victor Isler and Justin Monroe. The Order of the Long Leaf Pine is the highest civilian honor to be granted in North Carolina and is among the most prestigious awards presented on behalf of the Governor of North Carolina. In addition, oil portraits by local artist Annette Hall will be unveiled. The portraits will individually feature Isler and Monroe and remain on-site at Salisbury Fire Station #1. Engraved bronze plaques, featuring the names, likeness, and service of the three City of Salisbury Firefighters, who have perished in the line-of-duty, will be unveiled during the ceremony. The memorial plaques will remain permanently located in the front foyer of Station #1. A plaque memorializing Joe Jenkins, a Salisbury firefighter who perished in the line of duty in 1971, will accompany those of his fallen brothers Victor Isler and Justin Monroe.

Citizens are advised that during the Memorial service, a portion of South Main Street will be blocked to traffic beginning at approximately 8 am. The street is scheduled to reopen by approximately 10 am.

The Miller’s Ferry Fire Station, 2650 Long Ferry Road, will host an afternoon dedication service at 2:30 pm. The public ceremony will offer the dedication of a newly-installed, informational sign, located at the front of the fire station. The free-standing (6’x 10’) brick sign offers digital display and will be dedicated in loving memory of Justin E. Monroe. Miller’s Ferry Fire Chief Bobby Fox shares that the project has been funded through donations from throughout the community.

For more information regarding services planned for March 7, 2009, please contact the Salisbury Fire Department at 704-638-5351.

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